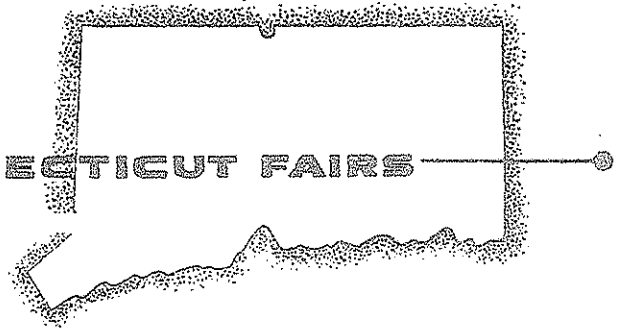


THE ASSOCIATION

CONNECTICUT FAIRS



**TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT FAIRS, INC.  
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILLS 5446 AND 428**

**MARCH 12, 2010**

I am Thomas Zagurski of Terryville, President of the Association of Connecticut Fairs, a voluntary association of 51 fairs held annually throughout Connecticut. I am speaking today in support of Raised Bill 5446, An Act Concerning Mass Gatherings, and its companion bill, Section 42 of Raised Bill 428, An Act Concerning Revisions to the Public Health Related Statutes.

The mass gatherings laws have been on the books for approximately 40 years, but until 2009 all of our fairs have been exempt because they did not meet the threshold of operating for more than 18 consecutive hours in any one day. Public Act 09-232, effective October 1, 2009, lowered the threshold to 12 consecutive hours which made many of our fairs subject to the mass gatherings laws. Most of our member fairs have been held in the same locations for many years and are one of the largest annual events in their towns. The volunteers who manage and operate these fairs have worked cooperatively with their local officials so that, over the years, they have developed standard protocols and procedures that fit their local situation to insure that their fairs provided wholesome entertainment in a safe and sanitary environment. Compliance with the requirements of the mass gatherings law as amended by Public Act 09-232 would have disrupted a system that has worked well for many years. The initial attitude of our member fairs was, "It ain't broke so don't fix it."

During the past three weeks representatives from the Association of Connecticut Fairs have met with staff from the Department of Public Health to address this problem. As a result, the Department of Public Health has now submitted proposed revisions to both Raised Bill 5446 and Section 42 of Raised Bill 428 which incorporate protocols and procedures our member fairs have been following for many years. These revisions will also permit our fairs to submit one package to their local chief elected official which will cover not only their annual fair but also other events which may occur on their fairgrounds at other times during the year.

New legislation is normally effective October 1 following its passage. In this case, the Association of Connecticut Fairs asks that these revisions to the mass gatherings law be made effective upon passage so they will be in effect during the 2010 fair season which runs from July through October.

I want to take a moment to publicly thank the staff of the Department of Public Health and in particular Karen Buckley - Bates, Suzanne Blancaflor and Leonard Guercia for all the time and effort they have put into resolving the issues that were created by the passage of Public Act 09-232 and also Representative Matthew Lesser for his help in bringing the parties together. It is reassuring to know that our elected legislators and the Department of Public Health can work together with the Association of Connecticut Fairs and our member fairs in such a cooperative manner.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

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